

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended): An image processing method for creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

the image processing method comprising the steps of:

setting at least one predetermined first default color each to a corresponding one of at least one of said character color and said decorative color, when arbitrary setting of said at least one of said character color and said decorative character is omitted;

setting, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, a predetermined second default color to one of said character color and said decorative color; and

forming said decorated character image by coloring said character portion and said decorative portion with said character color and said decorative color, respectively[.];

wherein said predetermined second default color used when an image of said background is a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, or a background pattern image with a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on said plain image, is a transparent color which is assimilated with said background, and set to said character color.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended): ~~An image processing method according to claim 1,~~ An image processing method for creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

the image processing method comprising the steps of:

setting at least one predetermined first default color each to a corresponding one of at least one of said character color and said decorative color, when arbitrary setting of said at least one of said character color and said decorative character is omitted;

setting, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, a predetermined second default color to one of said character color and said decorative color; and

forming said decorated character image by coloring said character portion and said decorative portion with said character color and said decorative color, respectively;

wherein said predetermined second default color used when an image of said background is a background pattern image having a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, is a color identical to a color of said plain image.

4. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 1, wherein said at least one arbitrary character decoration includes character-shading decoration forming a shaded character by shading said at least one arbitrary character.

5. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 1, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining decoration forming an outlined character by outlining a contour of said at least one arbitrary character.

6. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 1, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining/shading decoration forming an outlined and shaded character by providing an outlined character with shades.

7. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 1, further including the step of outputting an output image based on said decorated character image.

8. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 7, wherein the step of outputting said output image is the step of displaying said output image on a display screen.

9. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 7, wherein the step of outputting said output image is the step of printing said output image on a printing medium.

10. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 9, wherein said printing medium is a tape.

11. (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus for creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

the image processing apparatus comprising:

first default color-setting means for setting at least one predetermined first default color each to a corresponding one of at least one of said character color and said decorative color, when arbitrary setting of said at least one of said character color and said decorative character is omitted;

second default color-setting means for setting, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said

decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, a predetermined second default color to one of said character color and said decorative color; and

image-forming means for forming said decorated character image by coloring said character portion and said decorative portion with said character color and said decorative color, respectively[[]];

wherein said predetermined second default color used when an image of said background is a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, or a background pattern image with a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on said plain image, is a transparent color which is assimilated with said background, and set to said character color.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended): ~~An image processing apparatus according to claim 11,~~ An image processing apparatus for creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

the image processing apparatus comprising:

first default color-setting means for setting at least one predetermined first default color each to a corresponding one of at least one of said character color and

said decorative color, when arbitrary setting of said at least one of said character color and said decorative character is omitted;

second default color-setting means for setting, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, a predetermined second default color to one of said character color and said decorative color; and

image-forming means for forming said decorated character image by coloring said character portion and said decorative portion with said character color and said decorative color, respectively;

wherein said predetermined second default color used when an image of said background is a background pattern image having a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, is a color identical to a color of said plain image.

14. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said at least one arbitrary character decoration includes character-shading decoration forming a shaded character by shading said at least one arbitrary character.

15. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining decoration forming an outlined character by outlining a contour of said at least one arbitrary character.

16. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining/shading

decoration forming an outlined and shaded character by providing an outlined character with shades.

17. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 11, further including image output means for outputting an output image based on said decorated character image.

18. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said image output means comprises display means for displaying said output image on a display screen.

19. (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said image output ~~image~~ means comprises printing means for printing said output image on a printing medium.

20. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said printing medium is a tape.

21. (Original): An image processing method comprising the steps of:  
creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

changing, when said decorated character image is to be subjected to limited-color output at a resolution lower than a resolution of said decorated character image as created, setting colors set for said character portion, said decorative portion, and said background portion of said decorated character image, including said character color and said decorative color, for said limited-color output;

changing, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, one of said character color and said decorative color to a predetermined default color:

forming, when at least one of said setting colors is changed, an output image based on said decorated character image by using said setting colors including said changed at least one of said setting colors, or setting, when none of said setting colors are changed, said decorated character image to said output image; and

outputting said output image.

22. (Currently Amended): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein said predetermined default color used when an image of said background is a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, or a background pattern image with a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on said plain image, is a transparent color which is assimilated with said background, and set to said character color.

23. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein said predetermined default color used when an image of said background is a background pattern image having a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, is a color identical to a color of said plain image.



24. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein said at least one arbitrary character decoration includes character-shading decoration forming a shaded character by shading said at least one arbitrary character.

25. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining decoration forming an outlined character by outlining a contour of said at least one arbitrary character.

26. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining/shading decoration forming an outlined and shaded character by providing an outlined character with shades.

27. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, further including the step of setting a limited color mode for carrying out said limited-color output, and

wherein the step of changing said setting colors for said limited-color output is executed when said limited color mode is set.

28. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein the step of outputting said output image is the step of displaying said output image on a display screen.

29. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 28, wherein said decorated character image is created as a print image to be printed on a printing medium, and

wherein the step of changing said setting colors for said limited-color output is executed when said resolution of said decorated character image is higher than a resolution at which said display screen can perform display.

30. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein the step of outputting said output image is the step of printing said output image on a printing medium.

31. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 29, wherein said printing medium is a tape.

32. (Original): An image processing method according to claim 30, wherein said printing medium is a tape.

33. (Original): An image processing apparatus comprising:  
decorated character image-creating means for creating a decorated character image formed by arranging at least one decorated character formed by providing a desired character decoration on at least one arbitrary character, on an arbitrary background, with a character color being set to a character portion corresponding to said at least one arbitrary character, and a decorative color being set to a decorative portion corresponding to a portion formed by said desired character decoration, said decorated character image including said character portion, said decorative portion, and a background portion formed by removing said character portion and said decorative portion from said background,

limited color-setting means for changing, when said decorated character image is to be subjected to limited-color output at a resolution lower than a resolution of said decorated character image as created, setting colors set for said character portion, said decorative portion, and said background portion of said

decorated character image, including said character color and said decorative color, for said limited-color output;

default color-setting means for changing, when a combination of said character color and said decorative color makes said character portion and said decorative portion difficult to discriminate from each other, one of said character color and said decorative color to a predetermined default color;

output image-forming/setting means for forming, when at least one of said setting colors is changed, an output image based on said decorated character image by using said setting colors including said changed at least one of said setting colors, or setting, when none of said setting colors are changed, said decorated character image to said output image; and

image output means for outputting said output image.

34. (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said predetermined default color used when an image of said background is a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, or a background pattern image with a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on said plain image, is a transparent color which is assimilated with said background, and set to said character color.

35. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said predetermined default color used when an image of said background is a background pattern image having a predetermined background pattern of a predetermined color provided on a plain image which is achromatic or unicolored, is a color identical to a color of said plain image.

36. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said at least one arbitrary character decoration includes character-shading decoration forming a shaded character by shading said at least one arbitrary character.

37. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining decoration forming an outlined character by outlining a contour of said at least one arbitrary character.

38. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said desired character decoration includes character-outlining/shading decoration forming an outlined and shaded character by providing an outlined character with shades.

39. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, further including limited color mode-setting means for setting a limited color mode for carrying out said limited-color output, and

wherein said limited color-setting means changes said setting colors, when said limited color mode is set.

40. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said image output means comprises display means for displaying said output image on a display screen.

41. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said decorated character image is created as a print image to be printed on a printing medium, and

Appl. No. 09/657,213  
Amdt. Dated July 26, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of May 3, 2004

Attorney Docket No. 81752.0097  
Customer No.: 26021

wherein said limited color-setting means changes said setting colors when a resolution of said decorated character image is higher than a resolution at which said display screen can perform display.

42. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said image output means comprises printing means for printing said output image on a printing medium.

43. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 41, wherein said printing medium is a tape.

44. (Original): An image processing apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said printing medium is a tape.